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ABSTRACT

This paper provides examples of how portfolios are used at the University of Dayton (Ohio) in an introductory course titled "The Profession of Teaching" to enhance the interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, linguistic, and spatial intelligence of preservice teachers. For example, students can include audiotapes of their experiences, poetry, sketches, or photographs. Portfolios help students reflect on their growth in terms of professional responsibility, command of subject matter, content-specific pedagogy, class organization and management, and student-specific pedagogy. Portfolios are considered a help for students to understand that their personal and professional growth is a life-long process, not merely a collegiate experience. (JDD)

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Portfolio Development:

Enhancing Professional Intelligence

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Portfolio Development:
Enhancing Professional Intelligence

The use of portfolios for assessment purposes is now a well-documented aspect of the literature. Most frequently, portfolios are used as assessment devices to determine in a more holistic, student-centered way how or whether students are understanding the content being taught by the teacher or faculty member. The focus in many institutions has been on "authentic evaluation."

Some higher education institutions are now using portfolios in new ways--as a means of helping preservice teachers better understand their own personal and professional growth. Such growth assessment is especially important given the recent interest in helping learners develop their different intelligences. Each individual has a variety of intelligences that are used in solving problems and making decisions (see, for example, Armstrong, 1993). Those intelligences are:

1. Linguistic intelligence- the ability to use abstract language to communicate meaning.
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence-the ability to use and manipulate numbers.
3. Spatial intelligence-the ability to perceive and recreate different aspects of the visual-spatial world.
4. Musical intelligence - the capacity to perceive and produce different rhythms and melodies.
5. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence - the ability to control and strengthen the physical self.

6. Interpersonal intelligence - the capacity to understand and work with other people.

7. Intrapersonal intelligence -- the ability to understand the inner self.

All the intelligences are important. Each can be symbolized in some way, each has its own developmental history (e.g., bodily intelligence peaks and then diminishes; linguistic intelligence expands as a person matures); and each intelligence has culturally desirable end states or examples that represent the highest form of achievement. Schools, of course, focus primarily on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence (consider, for example, the ACT or SAT). But successful teachers must have more than high levels of these two intelligences. Good teachers must also understand themselves and their actions (intrapersonal intelligence) and must be able to interpret the complex behavior of others (interpersonal intelligence).

Provided below are examples of how portfolios can help enhance the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence of preservice teachers.

At the University of Dayton, portfolios are used to help students reflect on their growth in terms of professional responsibility, command of subject matter, content-specific pedagogy, class organization and management, and student specific pedagogy. Geiger and Shugarman (1988) describe in considerable detail the elements of portfolio development at the University of Dayton. The purpose here is to show how portfolios can also be used to help preservice teachers get into touch with their own interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, which are the first to be discussed below. But as the reader will notice, portfolios have potential for use in

developing or understanding intelligences in other areas as well. The examples below are drawn from one introductory course (EDT 110) titled "The Profession of Teaching." Portfolio usage is a labor intensive endeavor for faculty, especially in terms of developing professional decision-making skills. Faculty members must guide students in determining what to include in portfolios, but they must refrain from dictating what to include. The choice regarding what does become included is ultimately each student's.

Intrapersonal

- Students analyze their modalities prior to developing their portfolios. They are encouraged to draw upon their less preferred modalities as much as possible.
- Students identify meaningful personal experiences for inclusion in the portfolio and are encouraged to provide structured reflections.

Interpersonal

- Students are involved in large and small group discussions of their portfolios.
- Students interview peers about their modalities.
- Students are encouraged to discuss issues/challenges as they develop their portfolios with each instructor. They schedule individual conferences with a faculty member after they have reviewed their portfolios.
- Students are involved in a K-12 field experience for the EDT 110 course

and discuss issues related to their portfolios with their cooperating teacher, and sometimes with their students.

Musical

- Students can include audio tapes of their experiences. One student was in a rock band, one was in a marching band. One instructor played student tapes as she "read" each student's portfolio. She noted that the tapes created an entirely different context as she reviewed the content and structure of each portfolio.

Linguistic

- Students do not have to adhere to a traditional, formal writing structure for their portfolios. Creative expression such as poetry are encouraged as ways to articulate experiences.

Spatial

- Students are sometimes asked to visualize and sketch or describe a favorite classroom, an ideal classroom, or a classroom we're discussing for a case study. Students can identify effective/ineffective aspects of those classrooms, and can make modifications in their graphic representations to resolve some typical classroom dilemmas. Some students include photographs of their experiences.

Summary

Portfolios are but one approach to helping students appreciate and understand the complexity of their own learning. The portfolio process is one that enables students to explore more fully diverse aspects of their own personal and professional growth. As the portfolio process becomes more refined, students should be able to appreciate the variety of skills and abilities that one needs to be successful in a classroom. More importantly, they should be able to understand how their own personal and professional growth are life long processes, not collegiate experiences.

References

Armstrong, T. (1993). Seven kinds of smart. New York: Plume.

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